

SERMON V.

THE UNCERTAINTY OF THE WORLD SHOULD TAKE OFF OUR
HEARTS FROM THE LOVE OF IT.

“But this I say brethren, the time is short. It remaineth, that both they that have wives, be as though they had none : And they that weep as though they wept not : And they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not ; And they that buy, as though they possessed not : And they that use this world, as not abusing it ; for the fashion of this world passeth away.” 1 Cor. vii. 30, 31.

“BUT this I say brethren, the time is short,” &c. In this scripture we have a great exhortation to use this world as if we used it not, which the apostle openeth by divers instances, and strengtheneth by divers arguments. The general exhortation brings up the rear, “They that use this world as if they used it not,” or as “not abusing it.” The instances march in the body and middle of the words ; “They that have wives, as though they had none ; and they that weep, as though they wept not ; and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not ; and they that buy, as though they possessed not.” Which are enclosed with two reasons :

One in the front, “The time is short ;” “This I say, brethren, the time is short, it remaineth,” &c.

The other reason in the close or rear of the words, “For the fashion of this world passeth away.” From all which then I take up this doctrine or observation :

That the consideration of the shortness of our time here, and that the fashion of this world passeth away, should move us to use the world in all our particular concernments, as if we used it not. For the opening whereof these several things will fall under our consideration :

First, That a good man may make use of the world.

Secondly, Though he may make use of the world, yet he must use the world as if he used it not.

Thirdly, What are those particular concernments wherein we are to use the world as if we used it not.

Fourthly, What there is in these reasons of the apostle, “The shortness of the time,” and the “passing fashion of

the world," that should move us so to use the world as if we used it not.

Fifthly, When a man may be said to use the world as if he used it not.

Sixthly, What is the issue and the consequence thereof, in case he do or do not.

Seventhly, What a man should do that he may get his heart into this holy frame, so to use the world as if he used it not.

First therefore, We must grant that a good man may make use of the world; he may make use of the world in reference to the *persons* of the world, in reference to the *things* of the world.

In regard of the *persons* of the world: so Abraham and Isaac did make use of Abimelech; so Jacob did make use of Laban; so the Israelites did make use of the Egyptians; so the Jews did make use of the heathen Cyrus, Darius, Artaxerxes, for the building of the house of God. Plainly then, a good man may make use of the world, the *persons* of the world.

And as he may make use of the *persons* of the world, so he may make use of the *things* of the world, for they are his own: "All things are yours, whether Paul, or Apollos, things present, and things to come; life and death, all things are yours." And who may not make use of his own? If a friend should send a man a gift, it would be accounted an incivility and unthankfulness not to make use thereof. Why truly, as for the things of this world, they are God's gift; "The Lord giveth, and the Lord taketh." They are God's gift; and will it not be accounted an incivility towards God, and an unthankfulness towards God, not to make use of this his gift that he hath given us. May not a traveller make use of those things in his journey, that are meet and necessary for him in his journey? He may. We are all travellers to another country, we are upon our journey, so far therefore as things are necessary for our journey, we may make use thereof. The Lord would have Adam himself to be employed in the state of innocency, in the things of the world, "Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thou hast to do." And the apostle, 2 Thess. iii. 11, shews that those are busybodies whose bodies are not busy: "We hear that there are some

which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busy bodies ;” working not at all, but working in others’ ground : “ busy bodies, because their bodies are not busy.” See how they go here together, working not at all, but are at work where they should not work ; those whose bodies are not busy, will be busy bodies. And is it not an evil thing to be a busy body ? It is so ; therefore we must work. How can we work if we do not make use of the world and the things thereof ? So that plainly then we see the first thing cleared. A good man may make use of the world, both in reference to the *persons* of the world, and in reference to the *things* of the world. A good man may make use of the world.

Secondly, But though we may make use of the world we must use the world as though we used it not, not regarding it too much, not setting our affections upon it too much, not spending too much time upon the world, and the things thereof.

For look as wicked men do use the things of God, and of the other world, so a good man should use the things of this world. Why now a wicked man doth use the things of God as if he used them not, pray, as if he prayed not, and hear, as if he heard not ; why, because his mind is upon other things : why truly so the minds of the saints are or should be, upon other things. “ Set your affections on things that are above.” It is a good speech that an ancient hath, saith he, As good men are, where they yet are not, namely in heaven ; so they are not where they now are, namely on earth, for your conversation is in heaven : though your communication be here on earth, yet your conversation is in heaven ; and if heaven be our object, earth will be our abject : few I confess that live at this rate, to use the world as if they used it not : but is there not reason, good reason for it ? let us see the reasons : is there not good reason for it ? Yes. For

If the world, and the things thereof be so our own, as if they were not our own ; then why should we not use the world, and the things thereof as if we used them not ? why now, though the things of the world are our own in regard of propriety, yet if you look into Luke xvi., you will find that they are called not our own, verse 11., “ If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will com-

mit to your trust the true riches? and if ye have not been faithful in that which is another man's who will give you that which is your own?" that which is another man's, that is the same with the unrighteous mammon; who shall give unto you that which is your own? spiritual things are our own; the things of God are here called our own; properly that is our own which we can carry up and down with us, *omnia mea mecum porto*, that is our own which we can carry away with us, out of the world with us, that is truly our own. But now, as for the things of this world, they have wings, yea Solomon saith, "they make themselves wings:" if you clip their wings they will grow again; they make themselves wings, and fly away; and they have the wings of an eagle, strong wings for to fly away. Now if that the things of this world be so our own, as if they were not our own, why should we not use the world, as if we used it not?

If the things of this world be, and are as if they were not, why should we not use them as if we used them not? In Prov. xxiii., Solomon saith that they are not, "Why shouldst thou let thine eyes fly upon that which is not." They are not, and if that they be as if they were not, why should we not use them as if we used them not?

If it be not in the power of any creature in this world for to help us, or to hurt us, to do either good or evil to us, why then should we not use the world as if we used it not? you know Psalm lxii. 10., "If riches increase, set not your hearts upon them;" why, "God hath spoken once, twice, and I heard it, that power belongs to God." It is not in the power of riches, or any creature in the world, to do us either hurt or help. In Isa. xli., it is made God's prerogative; "Shew the things that are to come hereafter," verse 23., "That we may know that ye are gods, do good, or do evil;" do good, or do evil: if ye will shew yourselves, oh ye idols, to be gods; then do good, or do evil; this is God's great prerogative, to to help, or to hurt, it is God's prerogative, it is not in the power of any creature for to help, or hurt; now if it be not in the power of any creature for to help, or hurt, why should we not use the world, and the things thereof, as if we used them not.

We are so to use the world, and the things thereof, as they are; why now truly there is nothing in this world that is

either good or evil morally, but as it is used ; prosperity in itself is not good, not morally good ; adversity in itself is not evil, it is not morally evil ; all the things of this world are but indifferent, neither good nor evil in themselves, but as they are used : thus then, if all the things of this world are but in their own nature indifferent, neither good nor evil, why should not our hearts be carried out indifferently towards them, and so to use them, as if we used them not.

All the things of this world, they are but to serve a turn, they are not to be enjoyed for themselves, only for to serve a turn ; there is nothing that you have to deal withal, but is merely for to serve a turn ; clothes are but to serve a turn, to cover nakedness ; good meat and drink is but to serve a turn, to serve our hunger, and our thirst ; money, and houses, and lands, are all but to serve a turn, only God is to be enjoyed ; God is not for to serve a turn, but all the things of this world they are only for to serve a particular turn. The schoolmen therefore have a handsome speech of a worldly man, they describe him, He doth enjoy what he should use, and he doth use what he should enjoy : God is to be enjoyed, and he uses him ; the world is to be used, and he enjoys that : but it is God alone that is to be enjoyed for himself ; all things here are but to serve a turn, and therefore why should we not use the world as if we used it not.

If the world do use us as if it used us not, and if the world do care for us as if it cared not for us ; why should not we use the world as if we used it not ? Paul reasons after this manner in Gal. vi. 14 : “ God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom (or whereby) the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.” The world looks upon me as a man hanged, crucified, hanged out of the way, why truly I look upon the world so too, saith he ; the world looks upon me as a dry leaf, and I look upon the world as a dry leaf. Thus now it is : the world cares for us as if it cared not for us, and the world uses us as if it used us not ; and therefore why should not we use the world as if we used it not.

Aye, but Solomon saith, “ Whatsoever thou findest in thine hand to do, do it with all thy might.”

True, and it is in our hand to use the world as if we used it not, and therefore this we are to do with all our might,

even to use the world as if we used it not. And so I have done with the second thing, Though a good man may make use of the world and the things thereof, yet he is to use the world as if he used it not.

Thirdly, Aye, but then what are those particular concerns wherein we are to use the world as if we used it not? Why the apostle here doth instance in four.

In the matter of our relations: "It remaineth that they that have wives, be as though they had none."

In the matter of our grief: "And they that weep, as though they wept not."

In the matter of our joy: "And they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not."

And in the matter of our possessions: "And they that buy, as though they possessed not." I shall run through them briefly, that we may have the clear understanding of the case, and the matter before us.

As for the matter of our relations: saith the apostle, "It remaineth, that both they that have wives, be as though they had none." A man may use his relations as if he had none; his relations.

Why, but is not a man to provide for his wife and children and family?

Yes, he is worse than an infidel that provideth not for his wife and for his family, for his relations. But when a man hath relations, he is very apt to be lost therein; a man may be drunk with his own beer or wine. "I have married a wife, and I cannot come;" therefore he is to use his relations as if he had none, in regard of his care to please God; as diligent in frequenting the means of grace, as if he had no relations. For, saith he, verse 32. "But I would have you without carefulness, he that is unmarried, careth for the things that belong to the Lord, how he may please the Lord. He that is married, careth for the things that are of the world, how he may please his wife." In reference therefore unto the pleasing of God, frequenting of the means of grace, let him that hath relations be as if he had none, hindered no more by them, than if he had none.

Let him be as zealous for the truth, as if he had none.

Let him be as apt, and ready to suffer for the cause of Christ, as if he had none. We are apt to boggle at suffer-

ings, because of our relations ; What shall become of my wife and children ? What shall become of my family ? It was a speech therefore of Origen, when he was young, unto his father, when his father was to go and suffer martyrdom for the cause of Christ ; O my father, saith he, O my father, take heed that you do not baulk this suffering for my sake, that you may provide for me. We are very apt to baulk sufferings for the cause of Christ, upon the account of our family, and upon the account of our relations ; but now, let him that hath relations be as if he had none, frequenting and using of the means of grace, praying, reading, hearing, as if he had none ; as zealous for the truth, as if he had none ; as apt and ready to suffer for the cause of Christ, as if he had none. Thus we are to use the world as if we used it not, in reference to this concernment. I must but touch upon things.

As for the matter of grief, saith the apostle, “ And they that weep, as though they wept not.” It is lawful to grieve and weep, not only for our sins, but for the misery of the times. “ Oh, that my head were waters, and that mine eyes were a fountain of tears, that I could weep day and night for the slaughters.” “ Mine eyes run down with rivers of tears,” saith David, “ because they keep not thy law.” God hath a bottle to keep all these pearls in ; the tears of his people, they are precious, and too precious to be lost. As God hath a bag for all the sins of the wicked to keep them in, so he hath a bottle for all the tears of the saints ; but yet we must not weep too much, but grieve as if we grieved not.

Or otherwise it will argue that we have too much love to the world : Love is the cause of grief ; the more passionately you grieve for any outward thing, the more abundantly you shew your love thereunto, and it will in some measure reflect upon your God. It is a considerable speech that of a child, when the mother of the child had used to say upon all her losses, Yet my God lives ; when she had lost a child, she would say, Yet my God is alive ; when she had lost a friend, Yet my God is alive. At last, losing a child she loved much, she wept very much, and another of her children came unto her and said, Mother, is your God dead ? mother, is not your God alive ? she used to say still, yet my God is alive, and now weeping much, and not saying so, the child said, Mother,

is not your God alive? Truly this grieving much, it hath such a reflexion as this, is not your God alive? christians, is not your God alive? you know what the apostle saith, "Rejoice in the Lord evermore, and again I say rejoice."

If that we are to rejoice in the Lord evermore, then surely we are to weep as if we wept not, and to grieve as if we grieved not. And thus we are to use the world as if we used it not, in reference to this concernment, the matter of our grief.

As for the matter of our joy, the apostle saith, "And let them that rejoice, be as though they rejoiced not:" it is lawful to rejoice, even in the things of the world, "Rejoice in the wife of thy youth." God hath provided several delightful objects for every sense; there is music for hearing, and there are smells, and sweet smells for smelling, sweet things for the taste. God hath so ordered things that every sense hath its delightful object: surely therefore it is lawful to take pleasure, and to rejoice in the things of this world.

But still, though we do rejoice in the things of this world, we must rejoice as if we rejoiced not.

For why should I joy much in that which I cannot enjoy? why now the things of this world I may use, but I cannot enjoy them, God only is to be enjoyed.

Who will rejoice with all his might in the blaze of a wisp? a wisp of straw set on fire makes a great blaze, but it ends in black ashes: who rejoiceth much in the blaze of the wisp? why truly the best outward thing, it is but the blaze of a wisp, and if we do not take heed, it ends in black ashes.

Who would rejoice much in that which is but a *tanquam*, a *quasi* of good, which he cannot satisfy his soul in? There is a crack in the finest crystal glass in this world, a crevice: what outward thing is there in all the world, but hath some crevice in it? what beauty, but hath some wart grows upon the face on it? Our Saviour Christ was at a wedding, and when he was there the wine was spent; why? for to shew that in the midst of all our fulness and joy, there is a deficiency, and there is a want, bottles will be empty.

And if it be the great work of a christian for to moderate his affections, then should we not grieve as if we grieved not, and rejoice as if we rejoiced not?

The great work of a christian, what is it? why, the great

work of a christian is not for to know much ; the great work of a christian is not to have much ; he is a christian indeed that grieves as if he grieved not, and rejoiceth as if he rejoiced not, that moderates his affections, that hath the command and the true moderation of his affections, aye, he is a christian indeed. So that thus then we see, that we are to use the world as if we used it not, in reference to this concernment, the matter of our joy.

As for the matter of our possessions, the apostle saith, " And let them that buy, be as though they possessed not : it is lawful, and very lawful to buy and sell, and to possess.

For else there would be no propriety, but there is a propriety in nature, the last commandment, " Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is his." The moral law, the law of nature tells us, that there is an *his*, that is, a propriety ; and the gospel tells us, and the law of the gospel tells us, that there must be liberality, surely then it is lawful to buy, and sell, and to possess : it is lawful.

But though we may buy, and sell, and possess, yet we must possess as if we possessed not, buy as if we bought not, and possess as if we possessed not. For else,

How can we be strangers here : it is said of Abraham, by faith, " he was a stranger in the land of promise." A stranger in the land of promise, certainly if a man would let out his heart upon any land, a good man would let out his heart to the utmost upon the land of promise. What, the land of promise, and yet a stranger to it. Yes, though it were the land of promise, yet a stranger to it.

How can a man be patient in the loss of things, if he be not weaned from them while he hath them. Surely Job was weaned from what he had, by being so patient under his loss.

And if that good men have other greater things and possessions for to mind, and they cannot intensively mind both : why then a man must surely so possess, as if he possessed not. Why now a good man hath higher and greater possessions to mind, an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, that fadeth not away, reserved in the heavens. And both he cannot mind together, but he must love the one, and hate the other. The intenseness about the one, must be remissness about the other. Then surely it is our duty to use the world

as if we used it not, in reference unto this concernment; namely, this concernment of our possessions. And so you see the thing now cleared by these four instances. We are to use the world as if we used it not; in the matter of our relations; in the matter of our griefs; in the matter of our joys; and in the matter of our possessions.

Fourthly, Well, but then, what is there in these reasons of the apostle, The shortness of the time, And the fashion of the world passing away. What is there in these reasons that may enforce this exhortation, To use the world as if we used it not?

Much every way, still I must but touch at things.

The time is short. Use the world as if we used it not; for the time is short.

The time of our life is short, it is but short. A great business we have to do in reference to our eternity, and our time to do it in is but short. Time rolled and trussed up as it were into a little bundle; and therefore why should we not use the world as if we used it not? If a country-man come to London upon some business that doth concern him nearly in his life, why, will he run up and down the city for to see things; go and see the lions and the bears, and not mind and dispatch his business? Or if a citizen go into the country about some business that concerns his life, will he run up and down the closes for to catch butterflies and to gather cowslips, when all his time is but little enough for to do his business in? Surely no, we are upon our life, and we are upon our eternity, and upon this little spot and moment of time hangs our eternity. What shall we run up and down catching butterflies, gathering cowslips, running up and down to see the lions and the bears, and our business undone and our time but little? All the time that we have is little enough to make our calling and election sure.

All the time we have is little enough for the preparing for our great change. The devil doth improve his time upon this score. We read in the Revelations, that the devil is come down with great wrath, for his time is short. Shall the devil improve his time because it is but short, in a way of mischief; and shall not we improve our time seeing it is but short? Our time is short, therefore let us use the world as though we used it not.

But then as for the second reason, use the world as if we used it not, we must, "For the fashion of this world passeth away." The fashion of this world, it is but a scheme, it is but a piece of pageantry, it is but a stage, one goes off and another comes on. Take the world in the bravest dress, and it is but a fashion. And as that is a fashion to-day which was not yesterday, that is a fashion to-day which is none to-morrow; fashions pass away; so the fashion of the world passeth away. Joseph was in favour greatly with his father, and that favour passed away. His brethren sold him; then he was in an afflicted condition, being sold down to Egypt; that fashion passed away, he came into Potiphar's house, and there he had favour. Well, there he had favour a little time, and that fashion passed away; then thrown into the prison, and there he was in a sad condition again; and that fashion passed away, he had favour with the jailor. And then he came to the throne, to be the great counsellor of the nation; and that lasted not long, but that passed away. What piece of the world is there, but the fashion thereof passeth away.

Will you instance in the strongest natural piece in the world, or the civil moral piece of the world, or the sinful fashion of the world, or the religious fashion of the world, or the comfortable fashion of the world?

For the natural piece, the fashion of the world; what stronger piece of the world than the heavens and earth. Now read what is said in Heb. i. 10, 11: "Thou Lord in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the works of thine hands. They shall perish, but thou remainest, and they all shall wax old as doth a garment, and as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed, but thou art the same;" as the Hebrew in the Psalms: "But thou art he." But thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail; but as for them, though these things be brushed over a little, as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed. The nap of all these things, the fashion of all these things, it will pass away.

Or will you instance in the civil moral part of the world, that fashion thereof? What more desirable thing is there in all the world than friendship, a true friend to an ingenuous heart, there is nothing in this world more desirable than

friendship? Will you see how that passeth away? In Ps. lxxxviii. 8: "Thou hast put mine acquaintance far from me, thou hast made me an abomination unto them." It passeth away indeed; an abomination to friends; thou hast put mine acquaintance far from me, thou hast made me an abomination to them. See how it sticks upon his heart; he comes over again in verse 18: "Lover and friend hast thou put far from me, and mine acquaintance into darkness." See how the fashion of this piece of the world passeth away.

Will you instance in the sinful fashions of the world? Why, it may be, the poor people of God they are in a mourning habit, in a mournful fashion, and the enemies of the people of God, they are in a very brave and a gallant fashion. You shall see how this fashion passes away, in Isa. li. 7: "Hearken unto me, ye that know righteousness, the people in whose heart is my law; fear ye not the reproach of men, neither be ye afraid of their revilings, for the moth shall eat them like a garment." They are brave fellows, and they are in a very brave and a gallant fashion, but "the moth shall eat them up like a garment, and the worm shall eat them like wool, but my righteousness shall be for ever, and my salvation from generation to generation." As for the redeemed of the Lord, at verse 11: "But the redeemed of the Lord shall return, and come with singing unto Zion, and everlasting joy shall be upon their head: They shall obtain gladness and joy, and sorrow and mourning shall flee away." That fashion, that, their mourning habit shall off, and that fashion shall pass away.

Or will you instance in the religion piece and part of the world, and the fashion thereof? You know what is said in Heb. xii. 26: "Once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven;" speaking of the Jewish worship, the religious part, "and this word, yet once more, signifies the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things that cannot be shaken may remain." "Indeed," saith he, "we have received a kingdom, wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved." Indeed the kingdom of the gospel it cannot be moved, and the gates of hell shall never prevail against the church of God in the general, but the fashion of particular churches may pass

away, and be broken. What a famous church was Colosse in the days of the apostles; but oh, thou Colosse, where art thou now? What a famous church was the church of the Thessalonians; where is the church of the Thessalonians now? This tabernacle is pulled down, particular churches, though the kingdom of Christ shall go on, and shall prevail, particular churches may be scattered, and the fashion thereof may pass away.

Or will you instance in that which you call the comfortable part of the world? What is that of all things you take the most comfort in? Your relations, the husband in the wife, and parent in the child; the fashion of these passeth away, children pass away, husbands pass away, and wives pass away, friends pass away, relations pass away. Thus the fashion of the world passeth away; and therefore why should we not use the world as if we used it not? Pray now, when a traveller comes to his inn, why, doth he set his heart upon his bed, or his stools, or any thing that he hath in his chamber? No, for, saith he, I pass away, and these things they pass from me. If you have a fine silver stream of water run by your door, you do not set your heart upon it; for, say you, this fine silver stream that glides by my door, it passeth away, why should I set my heart upon it? Thus it is with all things here below; the things of this world they pass away, the strongest natural piece of the world, and the civil piece of the world, and the sinful piece of the world, and the religious piece of the world, and the comfortable piece of the world, all pass away; why then should we not use the world as if we used it not? And thus you may see what there is in these reasons of the apostle to enforce this same, and that is the fourth thing.

Fifthly, But when may a man be said then, so to use the world as if he used it not?

Why look, when a man doth so use the world, and the things thereof, as he doth walk with God in the use thereof, then he uses the world as if he used it not: when one man walks with another he turns as he turns; so when a man walks with God in the world, he turns as God turns. When God calls to joy, he joys; when God calls to grief, he grieves; he walks with God, for he turns as God turns. I say, look when a man doth so use the world, as he doth walk with

God in the use of the world, turning as God turns, then he doth use the world as if he used it not.

Look when a man doth use the world and the things thereof, in subordination to the things of God, then he doth use the world as if he used it not, in subordination to the things of God.

And look when a man doth make it his business for to serve the Lord, and doth the things of the world by the by, then he doth use the world as if he used it not: as if a man doth make it his business to get the world, and prays by the by, and reads the scriptures by the by, and doth good by the by: now when a man doth make it his business to get the world, and uses the things of God by the by, then he doth use the things of God as if he used them not. So on the other side.

Look when a man is dead, and estranged from all the world and the things thereof, through the communion and fellowship that he hath with Christ, then he doth use the world as if he used it not; for we die to the world, by living in God; I say, we die to the world, by living in God: why now consider it, it is one thing for a man to be dead unto the world, and another thing to abstain from this or that particular comfort of the world, this or that particular way of the world, possibly I may abstain from this or that particular way or course of the world, because my inclination doth not like it; some men's inclinations do not like drunkenness, some men's inclinations do not like this way or that way; possibly a man may abstain from this or that particular thing of the world, and yet not be dead to the whole world; possibly a man may be very negligent of the world, and slubber over the things of the world, and yet not be dead to the world: a prodigal man is not dead to the world; it is one thing for a man to be negligent of the world, and slubber over the things of the world, and another thing to be dead to the world, saith Calvin; this philosophy is in every man's mouth, he is dead to the world, but few there are that are dead to the world, and estranged from the world, through their communion and fellowship with God: But I say, look when a man is dead and estranged from the world, through communion and fellowship with God, then he uses the world as if he used it not.

Look when a man can leave and forsake his worldly inter-

est, his own interest in the world, that he may please others, and be at peace with others, truly it argues, that a man doth use the world as if he used it not : thus it was with Abraham, Abraham gave Lot the choice ; Abraham was the elder, and the choice did belong to Abraham, but he gave Lot the choice, and he parted with his own interest for peace and quietness. Why, Abraham lived by faith, and he used the world as if he used it not : thus should we do, for saith the apostle in Rom. xv., “ We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves ; let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification, for even Christ pleased not himself.” See how the apostle presses it ; what more ordinary than this ? every man seeks for to please himself, especially in the matters of the world ; every man seeks for to please himself, Christ pleased not himself ; would you therefore know when a man doth so use the world as if he used it not, if that you do so use the world, as you do walk with God in the midst of it : the things of the world in subordination to the things of God ; make it your business to serve the Lord, and other things by the by ; estranged from the world, through communion and fellowship with God : you can part with your own interest for to please others, that are weak ones ; this doth argue then, that you do use the world as if you used it not.

Sixthly, Why, but suppose I do or do not, what is the consequence ? Suppose I do not use the world as if I used it not, what then ?

I will tell you what then.

Then you do want this character of a good man.

Then you are not dead to the world, and if not dead to the world, then not dead with Christ ; and if not in communion with Christ in his death, not in communion with him in his resurrection.

Then you are defiled by the world, and the things thereof ; use the world as if you used it not, and you are not defiled thereby ; but if otherwise you are defiled, by all the things that you meddle with, you are but defiled.

And then your hearts will reproach you when you come to die ; oh, when you come to die, and you lie upon your death-bed : I had the world, and the things of the world, but I did not use the world as if I used it not : as the mother said,

Where is the child in the cradle, when the house was on fire, and they had been getting out the goods, and pulling things out of the fire : but at last, where is the child in the cradle ? So at last, when we come to die, oh, where is my soul all this while ? Your heart will reproach you when you come to die ; and blessed is that man or woman whose heart shall not reproach him when he comes to die.

Yea, let me say this farther, you cannot more prejudice the thing you love, nor wrong yourselves more, than by loving it too much, and not using of it as if you used it not : a man leans upon a stick, and if that be too weak it breaks, he breaks the stick, and it runs into his hand ; the stick suffers, and his hand suffers : so when we come to lean upon a thing, and do not use it as if we used it not, it breaks, and it runs into our hands : look into Exek. xxiii., and you shall see there how the Jews' lovers, and what they rested on, run into their hands, verse 5., " And Aholah played the harlot when she was mine, and she doted on her lovers, on the Assyrians her neighbours," verse 7., " Thus she committed her whoredoms with them, with all them that were chosen men of Assyria, and with all on whom she doted, with all their idols she defiled herself." What becomes of her ? Read verse 9., " Wherefore I have delivered her into the hand of her lovers, into the hand of the Assyrians upon whom she doted : " wherefore ? Why she doted upon the Assyrians her lovers, and I have given her into the hand of Assyrians her lovers, upon whom she doted ? why, when a people shall dote upon this and that, God will give them into the hand of their lovers, and make them to run into their hands : it is a most prejudicial thing to dote upon any thing in this world.

And indeed, to say no more in it but this, how will you be able to suffer ? Suffering times are come, christians ; not coming but come. How will you be able to suffer in these suffering times, if you do not use the world as if you used it not ? What makes the difficulty in suffering, but because we cannot part with this or that relation, or this or that comfort ? Oh, this makes the difficulty in our sufferings ; do but use the world now as if you used it not, you will be the more able to suffer ; but if you do not use the world as if you used it not, how will you be able to suffer in this suffering day ? Wherefore as you do desire that you may be able to suffer

in this suffering day: as you do desire that you may not be whipt by your own lovers: that you may not be given into the hand of your own lovers: that that which you rest upon should not run into your hand: as you do desire that your own hearts may not reproach you when you come to die: as you do desire that you may not be defiled by the things of the world: as you do desire that you may have communion with Christ in his death, and in his resurrection: and as you do desire that you may have this mark and character of a good man, labour so to use this world as if you used it not.

Seventhly, But you will say, What shall we do that we may get our hearts into this gracious and holy frame which indeed will fit us for every condition under grace? what shall we do that we may use the world as if we used it not.

I shall a little farther speak to this, and shew you what that man doth that doth use the world as if he used it not. And then give you some means.

First of all for that, what that man doth, that doth use the world, as if he used it not.

He will be sure to use grace in the use of the world, and in all his dealings in the world, and the things thereof. He is never satisfied unless he doth see that he doth use grace in the use of the world, and the things thereof.

He is always ready to give up that part of the world unto God wherein his affections are most engaged: his Isaac; for saith he, God doth use to try his people in the things wherein they do most delight: and therefore still he is upon that, ready to give up that unto God wherein his affections are the most engaged.

He will be sure to stand at a distance from the world and the things thereof, in the getting, as well as in the keeping; and in the keeping as well as in the getting. There are some that are very worldly in the getting part, and are very free and prodigal as to the keeping. Some are not so worldly in the getting, but they are worldly in the keeping. A man that doth use the world as if he used it not, he doth stand at a distance from the things of the world in the getting as well as in the keeping, and in the keeping as well as in the getting.

He doth not place his religion in a morning and in an evening duty, but in his walking with God in his place. Every

man hath so much grace as he uses in his place. Consider what I say, he doth not place his religion, he that uses the world as if he used it not, in a morning and in an evening prayer, but in his walking with God. Adam's trial did not lie in the morning and in the evening prayer; but Adam's trial lay among the trees. So the trial of a man doth not lie in the morning and in the evening duty, but in the trees, and in his calling, and in his place. And he doth not place his religion merely in a morning prayer, or in an evening prayer, and all the day after muddling up and down in the earth. No, he that uses the world as if he used it not, he doth not place his religion in an evening, or in a morning duty, but in walking with God in the use of the world.

A man that uses the world as if he used it not, he is sometimes more afraid of prosperity than of adversity. All men are afraid of adversity, but a man that uses the world as if he used it not, he is sometimes more afraid of prosperity: I am sure of this, he will fear God in prosperity, and love God in adversity. Now therefore, would you use the world as if you used it not, remember these five things.

But by way of means. If you would use the world and the things thereof, as if you used it not; then labour to possess your hearts much with God's all-sufficiency. In Psalm lxii. "If riches increase, set not your hearts upon them, once and twice have I heard it, that power belongs unto God." And mercy also unto the Lord: God is all-sufficient, there is enough in God alone, come, O my soul, possess your heart with this, ah, there is enough in God alone. Still be pressing this upon your own souls, there is enough in God alone, God is all-sufficient.

Look upon the things of the world, with the prospective of the scripture; not with one of the world's glasses: not with the world's multiplying glass. The world, and the glass of the world; if you look upon the world with the glass of the world, there you shall find that the things of the world are called goods, and they are called substance, an estate and substance. But look upon the world with the prospective of the scriptures, then they are called shadows, there they are called vanities, there they are called things that are not. What is the reason that people are so much in love with the things of the world, but because they look upon them with

the multiplying glass of the world, and not with the glass and prospective of the scripture?

Never fall in love with any condition for itself, but for the good of the condition. Love not your condition for the condition itself, but for the God of your condition. I do but name things.

Take all God's alarums of death, and mingle those with the consideration of the death of Christ, Christ crucified. There is never a death that doth pass before us, but it is God's alarm, and it calls off from the world and the things thereof. Truly this I must say, it is not all the deaths in the world will make us die to the world, only the death of Christ: take Christ crucified, and then you will die to the world. And therefore I say, take God's alarums of death, but be sure that you mingle those alarums with the consideration of the death of Jesus Christ.

And then afford the world and the things thereof, so much of your love, as better things do leave. For, christians, that which is too cold for God, is hot enough for the world; I say it again, That which is too cold for God, is hot enough for the world; and therefore afford the things of the world so much of your love, as better things do leave; for that which is too cold for God, is hot enough for the world and the things thereof.

Let the name of the Lord be very precious in your hearts and in your eyes; and then you will use the things of the world as if you used them not. Abraham had a very great regard unto the name of God, and he would not have it said that the king of Sodom made him rich; not a shoe-latchet will he take from him; it shall never be said that the king of Sodom made Abraham rich. He had a very high esteem of the name of God; Oh, God alone shall have the honour, saith Abraham, of making Abraham rich; it shall never be said that the king of Sodom made Abraham rich. He had a great care of the name of God. So if men would carry the sense of God's name with them into the world and the things thereof, they would use the world as if they used it not. It shall never be said that a base, unworthy way made me rich; no, God shall have the honor of it, and faith shall have the honour of it, and prayer shall have the honour of it.

Go to the Lord and beg of the Lord to fulfil his promises. Now God's promises are very many this way; but I shall only turn you unto that in Zech. xiv. 20, a promise spoken concerning the latter times: "In that day shall there be upon the bells of the horses, holiness unto the Lord." The bells of the horses; upon the bells of the temple? no, upon the bells of the horses, your carriers' horses. In that day shall there be holiness "upon the bells of the horses, holiness unto the Lord: And the pots in the Lord's house shall be like the bowls before the altar; yea, every pot in Jerusalem and in Judah, shall be holiness unto the Lord of Hosts." Every pot in Jerusalem, every pot in your house, shall be holiness unto the Lord; go to God to fulfil this promise; oh, there is such a promise lies for the latter times, let us go to God to fulfil this promise, that holiness may be written upon all our pots, and then shall we use this world as if we used it not.

Consider what a good thing it is to use this world as if we used it not.

Thereby you shall be able for to want and to part with the world with ease: "I know how to want," saith Paul, and "I know how to abound." Truly give me but this grace, and I will speak with Paul; give me but this grace, to use the world as if I used it not, and I will say with him, Now I know how to want, and how to abound. If you use your relation as if you used it not, you will part with your relation more easily; if you use your land as if you used it not, you will part with it more easily. Christians, parting times are coming, the Lord knows how soon we may be parted from the bosom of our dearest relations, and from all our enjoyments that we have here; would you part easily when the parting blow shall come? Now use the world as if you used it not; now use the world as if you used it not.

Thereby also you shall have more of the world, have it in more abundance, by using the world as if you used it not, you shall be no loser. I have sometimes stood and wondered at Abraham; for we say that the rolling stone gathers no moss. Abraham went out of his own country; God commands him in Gen. xii. to forsake his kindred and his father's house: so Abraham departed, verse 4, and Abraham came, and they went out to go into the land of Canaan, and

and into the land of Canaan they came," verse 5. And at verse 10, "There was a famine in the land, and Abraham went down into Egypt." A famine in the land! why, but did not God call him thither? Yes, "Go unto a land that I shall shew thee," verse 1. God shewed him thither, yet there he met with a famine.

So one may have a clear call from God and yet meet with a great deal of afflictions in the way that God calls them to; he goes down to Egypt to sojourn there; when he came into Egypt, "the Lord plagued Pharoah and his house with great plagues, because of Sarah Abraham's wife," at verse 17. "And Pharoah called Abraham, and said, what is this? now therefore behold thy wife, take her, and go thy way: And they sent him away, and his wife, and all that he had," verse 19. Well, away they go; "And Abraham went out of Egypt, he, and his wife, and all that he had, and Lot with him, into the south," verse 2, "And Abraham was very rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold." A strange thing to grow rich in cattle; how could he drive his cattle up and down from Egypt to Canaan, and up and down the country? Yes, thus removing at the command of the Lord, living in tents, and using the world as if he used it not; thereby, I say, you shall have the world, and have it in more abundance.

Yea, thereby you shall have it in a better edition, in a better impression, the world and the things thereof sanctified unto you; use the world as if you used it not, and the things thereof as if you used them not, you shall have them in a better edition sanctified to you.

Yea, thereby you shall have that which is better than all, you shall have the mind of Christ; "And we hope we have the mind of Christ," saith the apostle; we believe we have the mind of Christ: who have the mind of Christ? Saith David, in Ps. cxix., "Lord," saith he, "I am a stranger in this earth, hide not thy commandments from me:" here is his argument, in Isa. xxviii., "Whom shall he teach knowledge?" verse 9, "And whom shall he make to understand doctrine? them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts;" them shall he teach knowledge, and them shall he make to understand doctrine.

I will say no more but this, thereby you shall be happy

indeed ; use the world as if you used it not, and thereby you shall be happy. Who is the happy man in the world ? He is an happy man that can contemn, and be contemned, saith the heathen Seneca. He is the happy man in the world that can use the world as if he used it not.

And yet again I will repeat that thereby you shall be fit to suffer in suffering times. Suffering times are upon us, and by using the world as if we used it not, you shall be fit to suffer. And therefore again I say, As you do desire that you may be fit to suffer in suffering times ; that you may be happy ; that you may have the mind of Christ ; that you may have the things of the world in a better edition ; that you may have them in more abundance ; that you may know how to want and part with all things easily : now use the world as if you used it not.

And if nothing else will do, I beseech you take these two arguments that the apostle here uses, and lay them with all their weight upon your souls, lay them with your experience. Beloved, this I must say to you, the Holy Ghost doth never spend reasons in vain, the Holy Ghost hath no waste of reasons in scripture. Here are two reasons, "The time is short ;" use the world as if you used it not, "For the time is short." Use the world, for the fashion of the world passeth away. It is scripture reason, and there is no waste in it, and therefore lay it unto your own experience. And if you desire now to get this holy frame of spirit, and to use the world as if you used it not, go and say unto your own souls, Come, oh, my soul, why should I not use the world as if I used it not ? indeed the time is short, ah, the time of our opportunity is short ; the time of our spiritual enjoyment is short ; the time of this life is short. The time is short, oh, my soul, and therefore why should I not use the world as if I used it not.

And come, oh, my soul, the fashion of this world passeth away. And this I have experience of, witness all the revolutions of these latter times, how the fashion of all things hath past away. We have seen in these late revolutions the fashion of this world passeth away, and therefore, come, oh, my soul, why should you not use the world as if you used it not. You have now riches, it passeth away : relations pass away ; and friends pass away ; and creature-comforts, they pass

away. The fashion of this world it passeth away, and therefore, oh, my soul, now use the world as if you used it not. Thus the apostle speaks, this is his argument, and these are his arguments; and so say I, brethren and beloved, "the time is short, it remaineth therefore, that both they that have wives, be as though they had none; and they that weep, as though they wept not; and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not; and they that buy as though they possessed not; and they that use this world as not abusing it; for the fashion of this world passeth away."

SERMON VI.

MEN'S WRATH AGAINST GOD'S PEOPLE SHALL TURN TO
GOD'S PRAISE.

"Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee, the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain." Psa. lxxvi. 10.

IN this Psalm we have a declaration of the majesty and glorious appearance of God, in and for his church and people. "In Judah is God known, his name is great in Israel, in Salem also is his tabernacle, and his dwelling place in Sion," verse 1, 2. Where God appears as a Captain and General unto his people, and as a Judge.

As a Captain and General; therefore in verse 3: "There," in Sion, "brake he the arrows of the bow, the shield, and the sword, and the battle. Thou art more glorious and excellent than the mountains of prey. At thy rebuke, O God of Jacob, both the chariot and horse are cast into a dead sleep."

As a Judge, at verse 8: "Thou didst cause judgment to be heard from heaven, the earth feared and was still: When God arose to judgment, to save all the meek of the earth."

But if God do thus appear, to, and for, and with his people, why doth he suffer the wrath and anger of men to be so much against his people?

Why he answers it in verse 10. "Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee, the remainder of wrath thou shalt restrain." Though God do suffer the enemies of his people